

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 03384 231826Z

70

ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4762

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BAMA KO 3384

DAKAR PASS DATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ML, PINT, MILI

SUBJ: MALI CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY

REF: BAMA KO 3360 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MALIAN GOVERNMENT CELEBRATED 16TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE SEPTEMBER 22 WITH MASSIVE SHOW OF POPULAR SUPPORT AND IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF MILITARY POWER, INCLUDING FIRST LOOK AT MALI'S NEW MIG-21'S. PRESIDENT, IN SPEECH, WARNED AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD ADVOCATE TOTAL STATE CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

2. FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1972, MALI CELEBRATED ITS
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PAGE 02 BAMA KO 03384 231826Z

INDEPENDENCE DAY. BEGINNING WITH CONVOCAION OF CHIEFS

OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS (REFTEL) AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 21, PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE GAVE MAJOR SPEECH TO NATION THAT EVENING. REPLETE WITH DREARY RUN OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS WHICH ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO CONFIRM, TRAORE INCLUDED WARNING THAT MALIAN ECONOMY MUST REMAIN DIVERSIFIED--STATE, MIXED STATE-AND-PRIVATE, AND PRIVATE--DESPITE INEVITABLE CALLS FROM "AGITATORS" WHO WOULD CALL FOR PURE STATE DIRECTED ECONOMY. HE ALSO ANNOUNCED PLANS TO FORM NEW POLITICAL PARTY--UNION DEMOCRATIQUE DU PEUPLE MALIAN, BUT ADDED FEW DETAILS.

3. PARADE LASTING 3 HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 22 BEGAN WITH INTRODUCTION OF VISITING DELEGATIONS (GUINEAN PRIME MINISTER, OTHER MINISTERS FROM RUMANIA, UPPER VOLTA, IVORY COAST, ALGERIA, SENEGAL AND NIGER), FOLLOWED BY MARCH PAST OF YOUNG PIONEERS IN RED BERETS AND RED NECKERCHIEFS, CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONS, HUNTERS, LABOR UNIONS AND LOCAL BUSINESS FIRMS.

4. MILITARY PORTION OF PARADE INCLUDED COLORFUL MOUNTED TROOP OF GARDE REPUBLICAINE FOLLOWED BY SMARTLY-TURNED OUT INFANTRY COMPANIES, PARATROOPER PLATOONS, POLICE WITH RIOT BATONS LED BY WOMAN OFFICER AND GENDERMARIE--PERHAPS 25 UNITS IN ALL. WEAPONS INCLUDED FOLDING-STOCK SUBMACHINE GUNS, AK-47'S, SOVIET AUTOMATIC RIFLES AND OLDER STYLE RIFLES, POSSIBLY FRENCH.

5. MILITARY VEHICLES INCLUDED ARMORED CAR UNITS (BRDM'S), COMMUNICATION JEEPS, 100 MM. FIELD GUNS, HEAVY MORTARS, 122 MM. TRUCK MOUNTED ROCKET LAUNCHERS, MOBILE AA ARTILLERY AND HEAVY ENGINEER EQUIPMENT. NO TANKS OR TRACKED VEHICLES DISPLAYED. MIG-17'S, HELICOPTERS, AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TWO MIG-21'S MADE PASSES OVER PARADE ROUTE.

6. AS USUAL, MALIAN INDIVIDUALITY ASSERTED ITSELF. AN ELDERLY MALIAN DRESSED IN A WHITE FRENCH COLONIAL OFFICER'S UNIFORM, COMPLETE WITH BOOTS AND SPURS, STRODE PAST REVIEWING STAND UNINVITED, HIS OUTSTRETCHED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BAMA KO 03384 231826Z

CAVALRY SWORD SCATTERING CURBSIDE PHOTOGRAPHERS.

7. COMMENT: FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE TOLD CHARGE THAT EXCEPT FOR MIG-21'S, NO NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS ON DISPLAY. PRESIDENT AND WIFE, PLUS ALL MEMBERS OF MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, REVIEWED PARADE. PRESIDENT WAS HOST THAT EVENING TO LARGEST RECEPTION SEEN HERE IN YEARS. IMPRESSION IS THAT

REGIME IS SELF-CONFIDANT, HAS RECOVERED FROM DROUGHT AND
IS LOOKING TO FUTURE.
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